



CITY OF WILLIAMSBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

DATE: December 9, 2004

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Residential Issues

Now that our initial "Community Conversation" forums have been completed, it is time to try to reach a consensus on some of the major issues that have been raised. This will allow staff to begin drafting chapters on these areas for the Comprehensive Plan update. This memo addresses residential issues – a separate memo will address commercial (and related residential) issues for the Richmond Road Neighborhood Focus Area and the Commercial Corridors.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

No changes are proposed for these residential areas:

1. **College Terrace** – Low Density Single Family Residential (1 to 3 units/net acre).
2. **West Williamsburg Heights** – Low Density Single Family Residential.
3. **Casey Field** – Low Density Single Family Residential.
4. **Matoaka Court** – Low Density Single Family Residential.
5. **West Williamsburg** – Medium Density Single Family Residential (3 to 5 units/net acre).
6. **Jamestown Road** – Low Density Single Family Residential.
7. **Rolfe Road** – Low Density Single Family Residential and High Density Multifamily Residential (12 to 14 units/net acre) for Ludwell Apartments.
8. **Burns Lane area** – Low Density Single Family Residential.
9. **Indian Springs** – Low Density Single Family Residential.
10. **Griffin Avenue/Pollard Park/Chandler Court area** – Low Density Single Family Residential.
11. **Braxton Court and Crispus Attucks** – Low Density Single Family Residential.

Changes are proposed for these residential areas

The residential component of the Center City area is an important part of the City's character, both now and for years into the future. A major determining factor for this character is the density that is allowed for new development and redevelopment. The idea of a true mixed use downtown area is very important, and this concept should be advanced both through the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

The densities that are allowed now in the Center City area range from 8 units per net acre to 14 units per net acre for the B-1 Downtown Business District. The density of 8

units per net acre is more of a suburban density than an urban density, and the Center City area should be seen as Williamsburg's downtown urban core.

Earlier Comprehensive Plans proposed higher densities than now are allowed in the Center City area. The 1953 Plan noted that the logical location for apartment houses was near the center of the City with densities of 18 to 22 units/acre. The 1968 Comprehensive Plan called for a density of 21 to 22 units/acre in the Center City, and 14 to 15 in outlying areas. The 1981 Comprehensive Plan proposed a density of 10 to 17 units/acre for apartments of up to three stories in height. The 1989 Comprehensive Plan recommended lowering the maximum residential density from the 22 units/acre allowed by the Zoning Ordinance to 8 and 14 dwelling units/net acre, and this was carried through to the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance was changed in 1991 to lower the density in the downtown area from 22 units/acre to the present 8 or 14 units/net acre.

A higher residential density is appropriate for the Center City area today, and will help to make downtown Williamsburg a more vibrant and viable area for both living and shopping. The 22 unit/acre limit that was used prior to 1991, and which goes all the way back to the City's original 1953 Comprehensive Plan, is an appropriate density to consider today. It should be considered as a "by right" allocation in the Downtown Business and Mixed Use land use categories (implemented by the B-1 and LB-1 zoning districts), and a "special use permit" allocation in the areas now designated for Office and Medium Density Single Family Attached residential (now implemented by the RDT and LB-3 Districts).

Increasing the maximum density for the entire Center City area to 22 units/net acre provides a potential for up to 231 new dwelling units, compared with to 85 new dwelling units under the existing land use and zoning categories. This "potential" is a theoretical maximum, and the actual construction will be less, and will happen over an extended period of time. The 231 new dwelling unit potential for 22 units/net acre probably translates into a practical yield of about 150 dwelling units, and the 85 new dwelling unit potential under the existing zoning probably translates into a 50 new dwelling unit yield. With 346 existing dwelling units in the Center City area would increase over time to about 400 dwelling units under existing zoning regulations, and 500 dwelling with the proposed 22 unit/net acre density. For comparison, the High Street project currently proposes 422 dwelling units, and New Town could have 2,300 dwelling units.

Details of specific areas are on the following pages, as well as the dwelling unit potentials for different densities.

1. **Merchants Square/Delly Area/Triangle Block** – now designated Downtown Commercial. Residential density could be increased from 14 units/net acre to 22 units/net acre, with a maximum of 10 units on an individual lot. This would allow a reasonable number of units on second and third floors, while discouraging large apartment complexes. There is a potential for 12 additional units at 14 units/net acre, and for 20 additional units at 22 units/net acre.

Choices:

- a. Leave residential density as is (14 units/net acre) – ***potential for 12 additional new dwelling units.***
 - b. Increase density to 22 units/net acre – ***potential for 20 new dwelling units.***
2. **City Square Area** – now designated Mixed Use (6 to 8 units/net acre). Could be changed by increasing residential density to 22 units/net acre, with a maximum of 10 units on an individual lot. This would allow a reasonable number of units on second and third floors, while discouraging large apartment complexes. A typical 0.2 acre lot would allow four dwelling units at 22 units/net acre, while the existing 8 units/net acre would allow only one dwelling unit. There is a potential for 13 additional units at 8 units/net acre, and for 44 additional units at 22 units/net acre, for an increase of 21 units at the higher density.

Choices:

- a. Leave residential density as is (8 units/net acre) – ***potential for 13 new dwelling units***, but actual construction unlikely because of limited number of units allowed in individual buildings.
 - b. Change density to 22 units/net acre, with a maximum of 10 units in an individual building – ***potential for 44 new dwelling units.***
3. **North Henry Street (east side) and Scotland Street** – now designated Medium Density Single Family Attached Residential (6 to 8 units/net acre). Could be changed to a new Downtown Residential land use category, with 8 units/acre as the base density, and an ability to increase to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit. There is a potential for 4 additional units at 8 units/net acre, and for 13 additional units at 14 units/net acre. If the density was increased even more to 22 units/net acre (as proposed for the City Square area), with a maximum of 10 units on an individual lot, there could be 20 additional dwelling units.

Choices:

- a. Leave as is (new land use category will be Medium Density Multifamily), with a density of 8 units/net acre – ***potential for 4 new dwelling units.***
- b. Change to new Downtown Residential land use, increasing density to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit – ***potential for 13 new dwelling units.***
- c. Change to new Downtown Residential land use, increasing density to 22 units/net acre with a special use permit, with a maximum of 10 units in an individual building – ***potential for 20 new dwelling units.***

4. **Blayton Building (WRHA)** – now designated High Density Multifamily Residential (12 to 14 units/net acre), but zoned RDT (8 units/net acre). Could be changed to Downtown Commercial land use, which could increase allowable density to 22 units/net acre. This could allow the option of construction of additional elderly housing on this close-in lot, either separately or in conjunction with other uses. There are now 38 dwelling units on the 3.8 net acre site. High Density Residential land use allows 53 dwelling units at 14 units/net acre. A 22 unit/net acre designation would allow 80 dwelling units - an additional 42 units.

Choices:

- a. Leave as is (High Density Residential land use – new category could be Downtown Residential) – ***potential for 15 new dwelling units.***
 - b. Change to Downtown Commercial land use, increasing density to 22 units/net acre – ***potential for 42 new dwelling units.***
5. **South Boundary Street/South Henry Street area (north and south of Newport Avenue)** – now designated as a combination of Low Density Single Family Residential, Office and Medium Density Single Family Attached Residential (6 to 8 units/net acre), and zoned a combination of RM-1, RM-2, and LB-3. The RM-1 and RM-2 areas could be changed to a new Downtown Residential land use category, with 8 units/net acre as the base density, and an ability to increase to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit. There is a potential for 13 additional units at the existing zoning densities of 8 units/net acre for RM-1, and 14 units/net acre for RM-2. Changing both the RM-1 and RM-2 areas to a new Downtown Residential land use, with a density of 14 units/net acre with a special use permit, would have a potential for 16 new dwelling units. Increasing the Downtown Residential land use density to 22 units/net acre would allow approximately 28 new units. The LB-3 area (designated Office land use) allows townhouses with a special use permit (8 units/net acre), but does not allow multifamily. The LB-3 District could be made consistent with the new Downtown Residential land use by allowing multifamily and increasing density to 14 or 22 units/net acre with a special use permit. There is a potential for 12 additional units at 8 units/net acre, for 22 additional units at 14 units/net acre, and for 32 additional units at 22 units/net acre.

Choices for RM-1/RM-2 areas:

- a. Change land use designation to reflect existing zoning [Medium Density Multifamily (8 units/net acre) and High Density Multifamily (14 units/net acre)] – ***potential for 13 new dwelling units.***
- b. Change to new Downtown Residential land use, allowing density to 14 units/net acre with special use permit – ***potential for 16 new dwelling units.***
- c. Change to new Downtown Residential land use, allowing density to 22 units/net acre with special use permit – ***potential for 28 new dwelling units.***

Choices for LB-3 area:

- a. Leave residential density as is (8 units/net acre) – ***potential for 12 new dwelling units.***
- b. Allow LB-3 residential density to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit – ***potential for 22 new dwelling units.***
- c. Allow LB-3 residential density to density to 22 units/net acre with a special use permit – ***potential for 32 new dwelling units.***

6. **South Henry Street (west side from Boundary to Mimosa)** – now designated Medium Density Single Family Attached Residential (6 to 8 units/net acre). Could be changed to a new Downtown Residential land use category, with 8 units/net acre as the base density, and an ability to increase to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit. If the area from 624 South Henry (house recently demolished) to South Boundary Street was completely redeveloped, there would be a potential for 16 units at 8 units/net acre, and for 28 units at 14 units/net acre. Increasing the density to 22 units/net acre would allow approximately 45 new units. Counselors Close, which abuts this area, has 51 dwelling units, with a density of 8 units/gross acre.

Choices:

- a. Leave as is (Medium Density Multifamily land use, 8 units/net acre) – ***potential for 16 new dwelling units.***
- b. Change to new Downtown Residential land use, increasing density to 14 units/net acre with a special use permit – ***potential for 28 new dwelling units.***
- c. Change to new Downtown Residential land use, increasing density to 22 units/net acre with a special use permit – ***potential for 45 new dwelling units.***

ROOM RENTAL TO VISITORS (BED & BREAKFAST)

The following options list changes (or no changes) that could be made to the Room Rental to Visitors. Any recommendations for change in the Comprehensive Plan would be general in nature, with the details to be worked out through an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Ordinance places the following limitations by corridor:

- Capitol Landing Road Corridor – 4 houses renting rooms to visitors allowed, 2 are approved.
- Henry Street Corridor – 2 houses renting rooms to visitors allowed, 1 is approved.
- Jamestown Road Corridor – 15 houses renting rooms to visitors allowed, 11 are approved.
- Lafayette Street Corridor – 3 houses renting rooms to visitors allowed, 1 is approved.
- Page Street Corridor – 1 house renting rooms to visitors allowed, none are approved.
- Richmond Road Corridor – 10 room rentals to visitors allowed, 10 are approved.
- 12 houses renting rooms to visitors are not located on approved corridors, and are nonconforming.

Choices:

- a. Current regulations are acceptable. Keep designated corridors, leave quotas in place allowing no additional B&B uses, and leave room rental limitation at four bedrooms.
- b. More flexibility. Keep designated corridors, leave quotas in place allowing no additional B&B uses, allow more than four bedrooms to be rented for each B&B, based on criteria to ensure compatibility with the neighborhoods.
- c. Still more flexibility. Keep designated corridors, eliminate quotas allowing market to determine number of B&Bs, leave room rental limitation at four bedrooms.
- d. Maximum flexibility. Keep designated corridors, eliminate quotas allowing market to determine number of B&Bs, allow more than four bedrooms to be rented for each B&B, based on criteria to ensure compatibility with the neighborhoods.
- e. Flexibility for larger lots. Allow larger lots to apply for a special use permit for additional rooms, with criteria to ensure compatibility with the neighborhoods as well as a limited number of larger establishments. This could be added to Choices a through d.



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